

NORTHWOODS JOURNAL — DECEMBER 2021

A Free Publication about Enjoying and Protecting Marinette County's Outdoor Life

In This Issue:

Join the 122 nd Christmas Bird Count!	1
Meet Our New Land Information Department Staff	2
Nighttime Outdoor Activities for Kids	2
Winter is Coming - Solstice 2021	3
100 Years of Sea Lamprey in the Great Lakes	4
WDNR - Peshtigo Harbor Shooting Range Temporary Closed	4
Bird Seed Tips & Tree Snags	5
Buy Sustainably-Grown Chocolate this Holiday Season	5
Cool Climate Bingo	6
Meet the Wisconsin Woodland Owners' Association	7
DNR Finds Fish Virus in Green Bay	7
What to do When Birds Hit Windows	8
Animals Around the Holidays	9
Energy-saving Tips for Winter	10
2022 State Park Stickers for Sale	10
Spotting Owls / First Barn Owl Nest Found in 20 years in the State	11
WildKids Magazine – Nature Education for Kids and their Grown-ups	12
December Night Skywatching	13
Christmas Décor from Nature	14



VISIT LAND & WATER CONSERVATION'S NEW FACEBOOK PAGE!

Please visit and like our new Facebook page! Our old page was unpublished for an unknown reason and we couldn't retrieve it or contact Facebook about why it was unpublished. Our new page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/Marinette-County-Land-Water-Conservation-100961462408740> and we will have the same kinds of natural resources news, information, educational links, etc. as before.

Please 're-like' our new page if you followed our old page, and if you are new to our Facebook page feel free to like it and pass it along to others who may be interested!

Join the Christmas Bird Count!

Add to a century of community science by joining a count near you <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>



What is the Christmas Bird Count?

Frank Chapman and 26 other conservationists initiated the *Christmas Bird Count* (CBC) as a way of promoting conservation by counting, rather than hunting, birds on Christmas Day of 1900. Some counts have been running every year since then and the CBC now happens in over 20 countries in the western hemisphere! [Read about the history here.](#)



Now a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 120 years of community science involvement, it is an early-winter bird census, where thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada (where Audubon partners with Birds Canada), and many countries in the Western Hemisphere go out over a 24-hour period on one calendar day to count birds.

When does the Christmas Bird Count happen?

All Christmas Bird Counts are conducted between December 14 to January 5, inclusive dates, every year.

Is Participation in the CBC free?

Yes, participation is free. However, you will need to provide your own transportation, binoculars and weather appropriate clothing.



How does participation work?

There is a specific methodology to the CBC, and all participants must make arrangements to participate in advance but the CBC is open to all! Each count takes place in an established 15-mile diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile diameter

circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally - **all** birds are counted **all** day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day. Birders of all skill sets are involved in the CBC. If you are a beginning birder, your compiler will pair you with an expert initially.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler.



Can I just do my own CBC and send in my data?

No. Since each CBC is a real census, effort data are collected as well as bird numbers, and since the 15-mile diameter circle contains a lot of area to be covered, single-observer counts (except in unusual circumstances) are not allowed. To participate in the CBC, you will need to join an existing CBC circle by contacting the compiler in advance of the count day.

As an alternative, you may be interested in getting involved in the **Great Backyard Bird Count** (GBBC) organized by Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Birds Canada. It takes place President's Day weekend each February, and you can count the birds each day in your backyard/community and then enter the results online. For more information on the GBBC, visit [Audubon's GBBC](#) page.

How are data from the Christmas Bird Count used?

CBC data have been used in hundreds of analyses, peer-reviewed publications, and government reports over the decades. Consult our bibliography page or use Google Scholar to search for research using CBC data. Yearly summaries of CBC data submitted by each circle compiler can be [found through this page](#). Audubon's quantitative ecologist updates the CBC Population Trends periodically which [can be viewed and downloaded from this page](#).

For more information, visit:

- <https://www.audubon.org/answers-your-top-questions-about-christmas-bird-count>
- <https://www.audubon.org/news/11-reasons-christmas-bird-count-rocks>

12 Activities Kids Can do Outside in the Dark!

<https://getthekidsoutside.com/kids-outdoor-activities-in-the-dark/>



Outdoor play doesn't need to stop once the sun sets. These kids' outdoor activities to do in the dark can be fun and exciting for all!



For many of us, sending our kids outdoors to play until dinnertime is common practice. After the rigor of school schedules, they need exercise, fresh air and the freedom to play unbounded. And the "witching hour" is much better spent outside, isn't it? But what activities can you do when the sun sets early and daylight fades by 4 or 5? We don't want to send them outside to play in the dark... do we?

The good news is that we don't need to be limited by daylight - kids can still have fun after the sun sets! If your children know to stay close to the house and are adventurous spirits, you can still encourage them to have fun in the dark (if they are old enough and clearly understand the limits you set in place).

That being said, it's important to set up some ground rules with your kids:

- tell them where they can go (define boundaries)
- tell them when you want them back
- encourage them to check in often
- better yet: join in the fun yourself!

Assess your child's comfort level with darkness and choose your activities accordingly. Here are a few ideas for outdoor activities that you can enjoy once the sun has set.

FLASHLIGHT TAG

Play tag with flashlights. The person who is "it" tries to tag players with their flashlight beam. Variation: Sit in a circle with the person who is "it" in the middle, blindfolded, with a flashlight. Players creep forwards and get as close as possible before being tagged by the flashlight. The person who gets closest is the winner.



GLOW-IN-THE-DARK TREASURE HUNT

Hide glowsticks or battery-powered candles in your yard ahead of time, then go out together to find them. Tell your children the boundaries and let them lead the way to see how many they can find.

FLASHLIGHT NATURE WALK

Give each person a flashlight, hold hands and set off into nature (or just your backyard). What can you see when you look up? When you look down? What happens when you turn off your flashlight - can you still see anything?

STOP & LISTEN

Head outside and find a comfortable place to sit. Ask everyone to stay quiet for several



minutes, taking note of everything that they hear. When the time is right, share your observations. Then repeat the process to see if you hear anything different the second time.

STAR GAZING

On a clear night, take a blanket outside, lie back and gaze at the stars. How many stars do they see? Any constellations or planets? (Research ahead of time to see which ones might be visible.) Consider keeping a [Sky Journal](#).

LIGHT-UP TOYS

Use light-up or glow-in-the-dark frisbees and balls. Or get creative and tape spoke lights to a beach ball!

FLASHLIGHT HIDE-AND-SEEK

Everyone has a flashlight to begin with. While the seeker covers their eyes and counts, the hiders all find their hiding spot (within predetermined boundaries) and turn off their flashlights. When time is up, the seeker uses their flashlight to see who they can find.

FLASHLIGHT ART

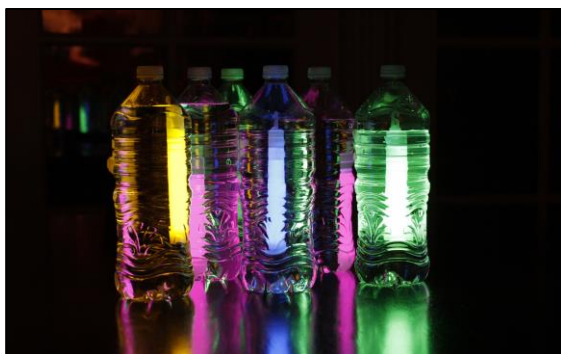
Using a camera with an extremely slow shutter speed, you can "draw" in the air with flashlights (or glowsticks). Set the camera on a tripod or other sturdy surface, and ask them to "draw" a simple shape in the air with the light pointed towards the camera (after you've pressed the shutter). Start with a 14-second exposure setting, an aperture of f/8, and ISO 1600, then play around to see what results you get.

DANCE PARTY

It's always time for a dance party, so have one in the dark with flashlights and/or glow sticks. Put on some music (being mindful of your neighbors) and go wild!

GLOW-IN-THE-DARK BOWLING

Collect 6 empty soda bottles and 6 glow sticks. Put a glow stick in each bottle and set them in formation (one in first row, two in second row, three in third row) on a relatively flat spot in the yard. Choose a ball (the larger the ball, the easier it should be) and have fun!



READING NOOK

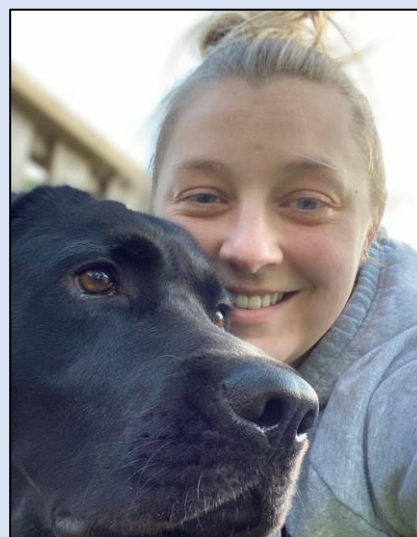
Set up a tent or lean-to outside, and gather together some battery-powered fairy/Christmas lights, blankets or sleeping bags and flashlights. Ask your child to choose a favorite book and head outside for some fresh-air reading time.

LIGHT IT UP

If permitted, have a campfire! When the time is right, light it up and spend some time together sharing stories and maybe even a s'more or two.

Meet the Land Information Department's Newest Staff*

(*Dog not included, but we wish he were)



Hi there! I'm Liberty Timmer, the new Land Information Administrative Specialist. I was born and raised in Marinette County. I graduated from Marinette High School in 2004. I currently live in Marinette with my fiancé Chris, our dog Cash and cat Little Man. Before working for the County, I worked for American Family Insurance. In my free time I enjoy to bake, read - I am part of the Forgotten Fire Winery Book Club - swim at River Cities Community Pool and garden in the summer. I'm awesome - just trust me on this!



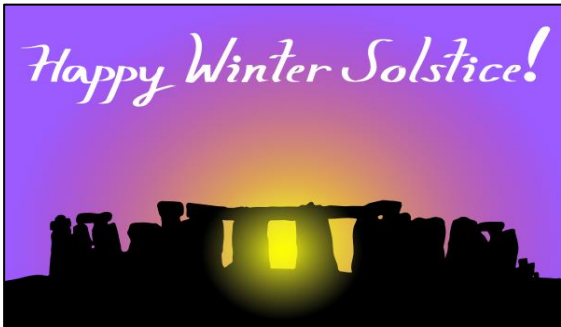
My name is Brody Devine, and I am the new Conservation Specialist for Marinette County. My responsibilities include providing technical assistance for landowners during the enrollment of conservation programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). I will also be assisting landowners with understanding best management practices, creating farm inventories, implementing a drinking water well testing program, and developing habitat conservation plans.

I was raised in Pound, where I was introduced to a variety of outdoor activities that drove me to work in natural resources. I attended UW-Stevens Point where I received a Bachelor's Degree in Water Resource Management. In my free time, I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, and scuba diving. Previously I was an intern for Marinette County Land and Water Conservation Division, and I am excited to be a part of the full-time staff. If you are interested in enrolling in a conservation program or have questions about what we have to offer, please contact me at (715)-732-7544 or BDevine@MarinetteCounty.com.



'Winter is Coming'... the 2021 December Solstice, That Is...

<https://earthsky.org/astronomy-essentials/everything-you-need-to-know-december-solstice/>



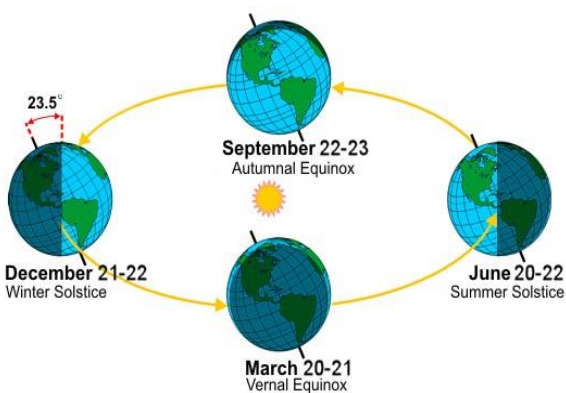
For us in the Northern Hemisphere, the December solstice marks the longest nights and shortest days of the year. Meanwhile, the Southern Hemisphere is having short nights and long days. The 2021 December solstice moment – when the sun reaches its southernmost point in the sky – will happen on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 15:59 [UTC](#) (9:59 a.m. [CST](#)). No matter where you live on Earth's globe – no matter what time the solstice happens for you – it's your signal to celebrate.

The solstice happens at the same instant for all of us, everywhere on Earth. It's when the sun reaches its most southerly point on the sky's dome for the year. At this solstice, the Northern Hemisphere has its shortest day and longest night of the year. To find the time in your location, you have to translate to your time zone. [Click here to translate Universal Time to your local time.](#)

What is a solstice?

The earliest people on Earth knew that the sun's path across the sky, the length of daylight, and the location of the sunrise and sunset all shifted in a regular way throughout the year. They built [monuments such as Stonehenge in England](#) and at [Machu Picchu in Peru](#) – to follow the sun's yearly progress. But today, we see the solstice differently. We can picture it from the vantage point of space, and we know that the solstice is an astronomical event. It's caused by the tilt of Earth's axis and by its orbital motion around the sun.

Earth doesn't orbit upright, but is instead tilted on its axis by 23 1/2 degrees. Through the year, this tilt causes Earth's Northern and Southern Hemispheres trade places in receiving the sun's light and warmth most directly. **It's this tilt, not our distance from the sun – that causes winter and summer.** At the December solstice, the Northern Hemisphere leans farthest away from the sun for the year.

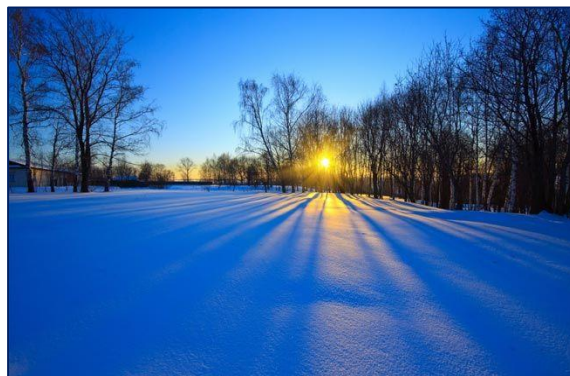


At the December solstice, Earth is positioned so the sun stays below the North Pole's horizon. As seen from 23 1/2 degrees south of the equator, at the imaginary line encircling the globe known as the Tropic of Capricorn, the sun shines directly overhead at noon. This is as far south as the sun ever gets, and all locations south of the equator have day lengths greater than 12 hours. Meanwhile, all locations north of the equator have day lengths shorter than 12 hours. For us

on the northern part of Earth, the shortest day comes at the solstice. After the winter solstice, the days get longer, and the nights shorter. It's a seasonal shift that nearly everyone notices.

Where should I look to see signs of the December solstice in nature?

Everywhere. For all of Earth's creatures, nothing is so fundamental as the length of daylight. After all, the sun is the ultimate source of all light and warmth on Earth. In the Northern Hemisphere, you'll notice late dawns and early sunsets, the low arc of the sun across the sky each day, and how low the sun appears in the sky at local noon. Look at your noontime shadow, too. Around the time of the December solstice, it's your longest noontime shadow of the year. In the Southern Hemisphere, it's opposite. Dawn comes early, dusk comes late, the sun is high, and it's your shortest noontime shadow of the year.

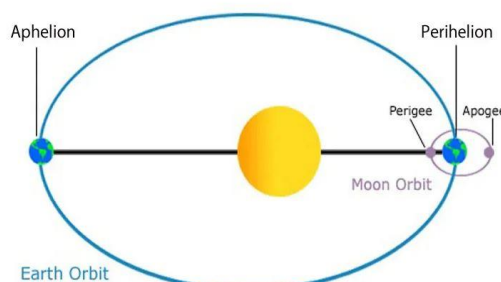


Why doesn't the earliest sunset come on the shortest day?

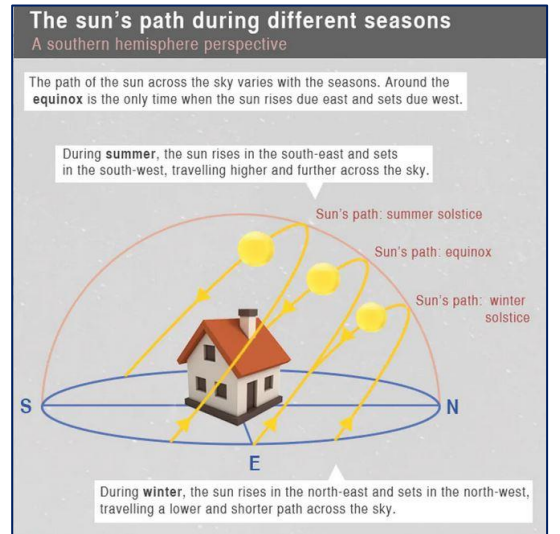
The December solstice marks the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and longest day in the Southern Hemisphere. But the *earliest sunset* – or earliest sunrise if you're south of the equator – happens *before* the December solstice. Instead of focusing on the time of sunset or sunrise, the key is in what is called *true solar noon*, which is the time of day that the sun reaches its highest point in its journey across your sky.

In early December, true solar noon comes nearly 10 minutes earlier by the clock than it does at the solstice around December 21. With true noon coming later on the solstice, so will the sunrise and sunset times. It's this discrepancy between clock time and sun time that causes the Northern Hemisphere's earliest sunset and the Southern Hemisphere's earliest sunrise to precede the December solstice.

This happens primarily because of the tilt of the Earth's axis. A *secondary* but another contributing factor to this discrepancy between clock noon and sun noon comes from the Earth's elliptical – oblong – orbit around the sun. Earth's orbit is not a perfect circle, and the closer we are to the sun, the faster we move in our orbit. Our closest point to the sun – or perihelion – comes in early January.



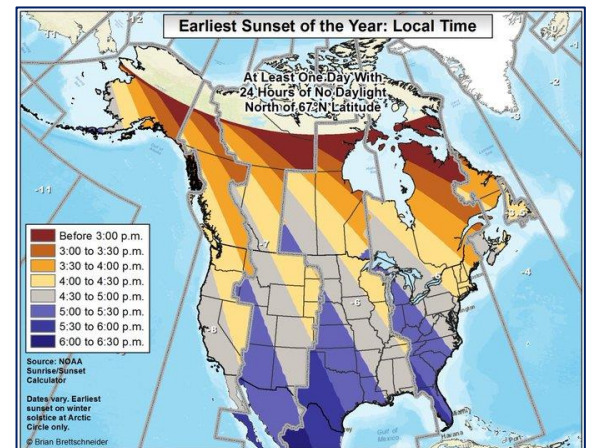
So we are moving fastest in orbit around now, slightly faster than our average speed of about 18.5 miles per second (30 kilometers per second).



The discrepancy between sun time and clock time is greater around the December solstice than the June solstice because we're nearer the sun at this time of year.

Does latitude affect the earliest sunset?

Yes! The precise date of the earliest sunset depends on your latitude. At mid-northern latitudes, it comes in early December each year. At northern temperate latitudes farther north – such as in Canada and Alaska – the year's earliest sunset comes around mid-December. Close to the Arctic Circle, the earliest sunset and the December solstice occur on or near the same day.



By the way, the latest sunrise doesn't come on the solstice either. From mid-northern latitudes, the latest sunrise comes in early January. The exact dates vary, but the sequence is always the same: earliest sunset in early December, shortest day on the solstice around December 22, latest sunrise in early January.

Bottom line: The 2021 December solstice takes place on Tuesday, December 21 at 15:59 [UTC](#) (9:59 a.m. [CST](#)). It marks the Northern Hemisphere's shortest day (first day of winter) and Southern Hemisphere's longest day (first day of summer). Happy solstice to all!

- ✓ <https://skyandtelescope.org/astronomy-resources/what-is-the-winter-solstice/>
- ✓ <https://www.space.com/winter-solstice>
- ✓ https://www.weather.gov/abq/clifeatures_wintersolstice
- ✓ <https://www.thesuntoday.org/solstice-equinox/happy-closest-to-the-sun-day-perihelion-2021/>

Northwoods Journal Online

Want to read issues of the *Northwoods Journal* online? Go to www.marinettecounty.com and search for 'Northwoods Journal'. We can also send you an e-mail reminder when each new issue is posted online, or you can get a copy mailed to you. Contact Anne Bartels, Information & Education Specialist at 715-732-7784 or email abartels@marinettecounty.com.



Infamous anniversary: 100 years of Sea Lamprey in the Great Lakes

<https://www.duluthnewtribune.com/northland-outdoors/7274072-Infamous-anniversary-100-years-of-sea-lamprey-in-the-Great-Lakes>



Two sea lamprey are attached to this lake trout. November marks the 100th anniversary of Atlantic sea lamprey entering the Great Lakes. Lamprey are still killing fish in the Great Lakes & tributaries, but thanks to annual control efforts, not at nearly the rate they were a half-century ago.

November marked the 100th anniversary of an infamous event in the history of Great Lakes fishing: the date when sea lamprey, native to the Atlantic Ocean, first moved into Lake Erie from the Welland Canal.

The parasitic invaders decimated Great Lakes fish populations, which reached rock-bottom in the mid-20th century until scientists and fisheries managers figured out how to kill lamprey in the streams where they spawn.

Since the control effort began, headed by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission in the U.S. and Canada, sea lamprey numbers have been kept in check. Their numbers are down 90% across the Great Lakes, but only with ongoing chemical applications and a \$25 million annual expense.

Crews spread a specific chemical poison in 120 tributary streams across the region, rotating between streams every three or four years, to kill the lamprey larvae before they can get big and head into the lakes to start feeding on fish. Adult lamprey swim in the lake until they find a host fish to attach to, then suck the life blood out of the fish using its specially-developed mouth (below), eventually crippling and killing it.



Of the dozens of [invasive species](#) that have entered the Great Lakes over the past 100 years, none have done anywhere near the damage as sea lampreys. But none have been as well-contained, either.

Today, sport and commercial fishing across the Great Lakes "is valued at \$7 billion annually, so the sea lamprey control costs, while expensive, are a small fraction of the value of the fishery," Marc Gaden, communications director of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, told the News Tribune. If the effort were to stop, lamprey numbers would rebuild quickly, again decimating fish stocks in the lake within a few years, Gaden noted.

In addition to chemical control, the commission has been involved in building 75 barriers to stop lamprey from spawning, similar to the device on Wisconsin's Bois Brule River since 1984. As long as the dams can be modified to allow fish to pass upstream, barriers work well to stop lamprey. Moreover, rivers with working barriers don't need the chemical treatments, Gaden noted.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was created in 1954 by an international convention between the U.S. and Canada specifically to address the decline in fish populations. But even before then, as early as 1946, scientists looked at using chemicals to control lamprey. More than 6,000 chemicals were evaluated when, in 1956, they finally found that 3-trifluoromethyl-4-nitrophenol (TFM) killed lamprey larvae, but did not harm rainbow trout and bluegill swimming in the same test jar.

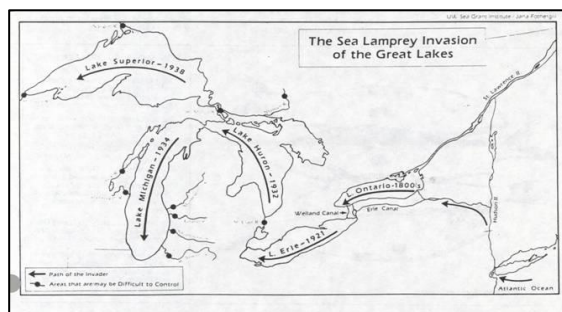


After several field trials to confirm the lab results, the first application of TFM occurred in May 1958 in what is now Elliot Creek, a Lake Huron tributary. In 1963, a second compound, 5,2-dichloro-4-nitrosalicylanilide (niclosamide), was also found to be selectively toxic to larval sea lamprey. The two chemical lampricides remain the backbone of the sea lamprey control program today.

"It's easy to forget just how dire the viability and productivity of the Great Lakes fishery became following the sea lamprey invasion into Lake Erie and the upper lakes," Michigan State University professor William Taylor, chair of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, said in a statement. Other efforts to control lamprey by fooling their sense of smell and luring them into traps are also being researched.

Sea lamprey are native to the Atlantic Ocean. They first invaded the Finger Lakes of New York and Lake Ontario in the mid-1800s through human-made canals. Fishermen at the time watched the damage sea lampreys were causing in that region, but it was believed that Niagara Falls would prevent them from entering the Great Lakes. That held true until a major renovation to the Welland Canal, the artificial connection between Lakes Ontario and Erie, allowed sea lamprey to bypass the falls.

On Nov. 8, 1921, Ontario commercial fisherman Alexander Crewe was pulling nets full of lake whitefish from central Lake Erie when he noticed a lamprey much larger than the native species he was used to seeing. He sent the specimen to the University of Toronto, which confirmed it was a sea lamprey.



It took another 18 years for lamprey to reach Lake Superior and start killing lake trout here, but the invaders had a rapid impact after that. In the early 1940s, even after decades of intensive netting, commercial fishermen were harvesting nearly 400,000 pounds of lake trout annually from Minnesota waters of Lake Superior. By the early 1960s that dropped to almost nothing. The state closed the lake to netting entirely in 1962.

Continued on page 6

DNR Announces Temporary Closure Of Peshtigo Shooting Range

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/51046>

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources today (11-5-21) announced the temporary closure of its Peshtigo shooting range in Marinette County due to a staffing shortage.

The department is recruiting personnel to staff the facility to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all users.



While this facility is temporarily closed, the department recommends users review the [DNR's Public Shooting Ranges](#) webpage for links to other range websites as well as updates regarding changes to range operations.

Range users can visit these nearby sites:

- **Peshtigo Gun Club** (W2803 Pheasant Farm Rd., Peshtigo, WI 54157). This is a shotgun-rifle facility.
- **Machickanee** (3490 Garrity Rd, Oconto Falls, WI 54154). This is a county-owned, rifle-pistol facility.

The range will reopen to normal operations once staffing is in place. The DNR appreciates users' patience during this temporary closure.

[For a list of additional shooting ranges and updates regarding changes to range operations, please visit the DNR's Public Shooting Ranges webpage here.](#)

Contact: Jon King, DNR Hunter Education Administrator and Conservation Warden
Jon.King@wisconsin.gov or 608-575-2294

SALT SMART. SAVE MORE.

Five tips for salting smart this winter:



1. Shovel first. Clear all snow from driveway and sidewalks before it turns to ice. Salt should only be used after the snow is removed and only in areas needed for safety.



2. Size up. More salt does not mean more melting. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt should be enough for a 20-ft driveway or about 10 sidewalk squares.



3. Spread. Distribute salt evenly, not in clumps.



4. Sweep. If you see leftover salt on the ground after the ice melts, then you've used too much! Sweep up leftover salt to keep it out of our rivers and streams.



5. Switch. Rock salt stops working if the temperature is below 15 degrees. When temperatures drop that low, switch to sand for traction or choose a different deicer formulated for colder temperatures.



How to Store Bird Seed / Tree Death Brings New Life

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/maintain-backyard-bird-feeders/> & <https://www.nwf.org/Magazines/National-Wildlife/2021/Oct-Nov/Gardening/Tree-Snags>



Keep the birds in your backyard happy and healthy with these bird feeding tips. Here's how to store bird seed to keep it dry and protect it from mold and insects.

Add More Bird Feeders

Crowded spaces can quickly lead to messy surroundings. This is true in many aspects of life, and it's also true for birds. If you have a single bird feeder constantly being mobbed by visitors, then maybe it's time to put out another one. This will instantly alleviate all the traffic going to a single source, and it'll help keep your feeding space cleaner longer.



Refill Bird Feeders After Rain or Snow

No one likes to eat soggy food, and birds, too, will avoid food that has been out in the rain. Even when it dries, the food is usually moldy, a potential hazard. If you can, set feeders up under a protected area, away from the rain and damp conditions. If this isn't an option, then be sure to clean feeders out after a storm or shower.

Practice Good Bird Seed Storage Habits

The seed you use is only as good as your storage method. Let's face it—feeding birds is an investment. That's why it's worth spending some time and effort to come up with a good seed storage solution. Ideally, you'll store your seeds in a sealed container, away from mice, squirrels and other critters. This will keep your bird feeding station tidy and birds healthy.

Clean Feeders with Bleach

A good rule of thumb is to [clean your feeders](#) at least once with every new season. Hummingbird feeders should be cleaned more often, every week during the height of the season. All you need is a little bit of bleach and a stiff brush to give them a good cleaning. Scrub with a mixture of 9 parts water to 1 part bleach. Rinse well and let dry before filling them.

No More Moldy Thistle Seed

Nyjer thistle seed can get moldy fast, especially in a new feeder that birds haven't found yet. An easy solution? Fill your finch feeder only halfway and clean it out regularly.

Weevils in Bird Seed

If you see bugs in your bird seed, they may be grain weevils (*Sitophilus granarius*), common pests of grains found in bird seed. The best way to keep out these invaders is to store bird seed in [metal cans with lids](#). Since you're already doing that, there's a good chance the weevils were in your seed when you bought it. It's best to buy fresh seed from a reputable bird feeding store, and don't hesitate to ask about the quality of the seed before you buy.



Looking for a simple, low-cost way to boost wildlife habitat? Leaving a dead tree or downed log in your yard will do the trick. Nationwide, about 1,000 species of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles depend on these “snags” at some point in their life cycle.

Until a few decades ago, snags - today better known as “habitat trees” - were routinely removed both from backyards and forests. Now we know better, says Ken Bevis, stewardship wildlife biologist for the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. “A tree provides excellent habitat for many, many years after it dies,” he says.

Woodpeckers are the first birds to take advantage of snags, Bevis says, usually beginning to excavate cavities five to seven years after the tree dies. Swallows, bluebirds, wrens, small owls, kestrels and wood ducks are among the birds that nest in the same cavities after the woodpeckers depart. Porcupines, squirrels, martens and other mammals also shelter in hollow trees. In winter, brown creepers, small nuthatch-like birds, and some bat species roost behind the loose bark to keep warm. Hawks and owls perch on the tops of snags when searching for prey.



If you have space, experts recommend three habitat trees per acre, but even one will provide benefits. “The smallest of snags is going to be valuable,” says Ashley Hoppers, a University of Georgia extension agent. “But the larger it is, the better.”

From hazard to habitat

As for the risks of keeping snags, avoid having dead wood resting against your home. Any large branch or tree that may fall on your house or your neighbor's should be cut down or trimmed. Bevis suggests removing the crown, or as much as one-half or even two-thirds of a dead tree, which he calls transforming it from hazard to habitat. “Broken tops are great,” he says. “An arborist can make it look like the snag broke off naturally.”

Downed logs also provide [valuable habitat](#). As the logs decay, Hoppers says, they replenish soil nutrients, attract insect food for animals and act as “nurse logs” for new tree seedlings to sprout. A wide variety of wildlife - from chipmunks to scarlet king snakes to several salamander species - will set up housekeeping in the logs, bringing an even greater abundance of wildlife to your at-home habitat.

This Holiday Season, Buy Sustainably-grown Chocolates - and help the Environment, People, and Wildlife

<https://www.nwf.org/Get-Involved/Live-Green/Sustainable-Purchasing/chocolate>



Chocolate begins with the cocoa plant, which is native to the tropical rain forests of Central and South America. For more than a thousand years, cocoa plants were cultivated throughout the forest, tucked under a lush canopy of shade. While much cocoa is still grown in the traditional way, many growers have cleared the forests to cultivate the trees in open plantations, leading to a host of environmental problems:

- **Fewer Trees:** Deforestation of traditional cocoa farms adds to the loss of tropical forests that is already occurring at an alarming rate in Central and South America and Africa.
- **Fewer Songbirds:** Loss of forest habitat in this region is directly linked to a shrinking migratory songbird population worldwide.
- **More Pesticides:** When trees are cleared, natural predators that keep insects in check are no longer present, so farmers turn to powerful pesticides that harm people and wildlife. These pesticides also decrease the number of tiny flies called midges, which are essential for pollination. Without these specialized insects, the world's supply of chocolate would be in jeopardy. And as rainforests are cleared, pollinators like the midge are in jeopardy.

Roughly two-thirds of production is now concentrated in West Africa's Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) and Ghana, where tropical forests are being replaced by cocoa crops. Côte d'Ivoire has lost more than 85 percent of its forest cover since 1960, mainly to keep up with high demand for cocoa.

Thankfully, high-quality, sustainably produced cocoa is within reach for consumers. *Shade-grown cocoa agroforestry*, where cocoa is grown amongst diverse crops and trees, boosts carbon sequestration and water regulation. It also provides habitat for wildlife such as butterflies, birds and bats. And it can enhance cocoa farmers' livelihoods because growing multiple crops diversifies farmer income and improves food security.



For more information about sustainably-grown cocoa, visit:

- ✓ <https://www.nwf.org/Home/Magazines/National-Wildlife/2021/Oct-Nov/Conservation/Cocoa-Scorecard>
- ✓ <https://www.leafscore.com/eco-friendly-kitchen-products/best-sustainable-chocolate-brands/>
- ✓ <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/find-certified/>



Cool Climate Bingo – Actions We Can Take to Help the Climate

<https://blog.nwf.org/2021/10/cool-climate-bingo/>

Addressing the climate crisis can feel like a monumental task with growing challenges like extreme fires and droughts, increasingly severe weather and rising sea levels. But our “cool climate bingo” depicts positive things individuals can do – big and small – to cool our climate while helping wildlife along the way. Save it, print it, share it, and then for extra climate-anxiety relief, read more below about these wildlife-friendly measures that will help us overcome the climate crisis!



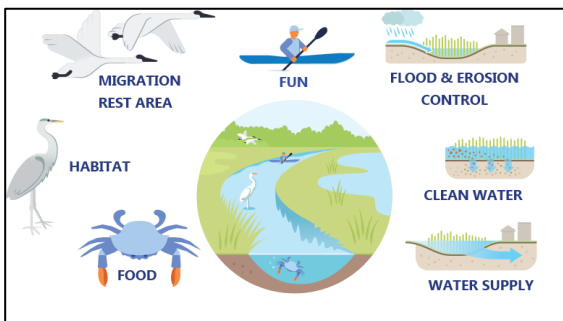
Overcoming the climate crisis

Forests and other wooded areas represent perhaps the best opportunity to remove carbon from our atmosphere quickly, reliably, and relatively cheaply. In 2018, U.S. forests sequestered 755 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, equal to the emissions from nearly 200 coal-fired power plants. And in our cities and communities where the built environment amplifies the effects of climate change, planting native trees along our streets and pollinator gardens in abandoned city lots can help cool local “heat islands” and remove carbon pollution from the air while providing climate-resilient wildlife habitat.



New York City's High Line Park features a variety of native plants to attract more bugs and birds.

Our nation’s floodplains, wetlands, rivers, and coastal areas provide vital wildlife habitat. When they are healthy and protected, they also serve as the first line of defense against natural disasters that are intensifying from climate change — protecting nearby communities by acting as a sponge during floods, storing water in times of drought, or providing a buffer from rising seas and severe storms.



Functions & benefits of wetlands

Forests, street trees, climate-positive gardening, and healthy floodplain and coastal habitats are all examples of natural climate solutions: strategies that support the ability of natural systems to mitigate climate change (enhancing the removal or storage of carbon) while increasing the resilience of human communities and wildlife populations from climate impacts.



The #1 action you can take in your yard for the climate and wildlife is to replace lawn with native plants such as black-eyed susans and coneflowers.

Serious efforts to address climate change require investments in clean energy, energy efficiency, and a resilient and modern electric grid — and ensuring that *all* communities benefit from the growing clean energy economy. Every day we are encouraged to see that wind and solar-generated energy can also be wildlife-safe.



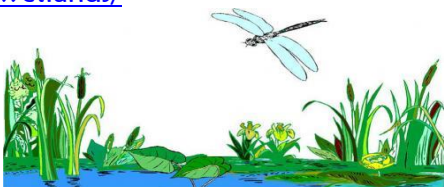
A solar array surrounded by native wildflowers can provide habitat for pollinators and other wildlife.

Efforts are underway to give companies incentives to locate new clean energy facilities in the places where fossil fuel plants, like carbon-polluting coal plants, are currently located. This will help ensure communities are not left behind by the tremendous economic opportunities that will come with the clean energy buildout.

Finally, please remember: when you choose to use low or no emissions transportation like walking, biking, carpooling, or public transportation — your efforts to have a net-zero carbon footprint matter for chipmunks, butterflies, moose, turtles, and you!

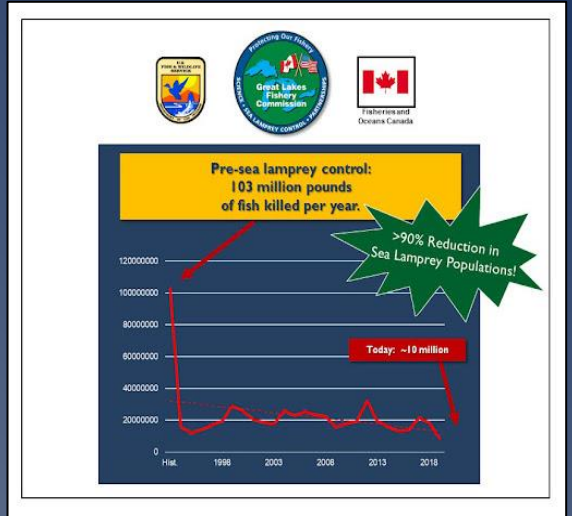
More links of interest:

- <https://blog.nwf.org/2020/03/6-actions-to-combat-climate-change-and-help-wildlife-in-your-garden/>
- <https://www.audubon.org/news/how-urban-landscapers-use-native-plants-create-habitats-wildlife>
- <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/iowa/stories-in-iowa/power-of-wetlands/>



Lampreys, continued from page 4

Lampicide treatments in Lake Superior streams began in 1958, but it wasn’t until the 1970s that lake trout populations began to rebound. After some ups and downs the big lake now boasts a strong sport angling trout fishery and ongoing commercial fishing in some areas. Lake trout have rebounded so well in Minnesota waters of the lake that the state Department of Natural Resources says stocking is no longer necessary.



It’s not that lamprey have been eliminated. Their pre-control numbers were estimated at 780,000 adult lamprey in Lake Superior back in the 1950s. That’s been reduced by 76% to an estimated 184,000 lamprey in the lake today. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission hopes to trim that number down to about 48,000. Lamprey numbers are down 93% in Lakes Michigan and Ontario, 84% in Lake Huron and 50% in Lake Erie.

“Today, sea lamprey control in the Great Lakes is remarkably successful,” said commission Vice Chair James McKane, of Kitchener, Ontario. “Over the past six and a half decades, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and its partners have reduced sea lamprey populations by 90% in most areas. ... Without sea lamprey control, the \$7 billion fishery would cease to exist.”



For more about Sea Lamprey and what is being done to control their populations, visit:

- ✓ <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Fishing/lakesuperior/lampreybarrier.html>
- ✓ <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/SeaLamprey/> - US Fish & Wildlife Service
- ✓ http://www.glfc.org/pubs/pressrel/100%20years%20Lake%20Erie%20sea%20lamprey_FINAL.pdf – Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- ✓ <http://www.glfc.org/pulse-on-science-finding-sea-lamprey-kryptonite.php>
- ✓ <https://doorcountypulse.com/vampire-of-the-sea-without-sea-lamprey-controls-the-great-lakes-would-not-be-so-great/>
- ✓ https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/sea_lamprey_control_in_the_great_lakes
- ✓ <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2020/09/sea-lamprey-invasive-species-research-eradication-great-lakes/>



Wisconsin Woodland Owners' Association – Creating Tomorrow's Woodlands Today

<https://wisconsinwoodlands.org/> & <https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinWoodlands/>



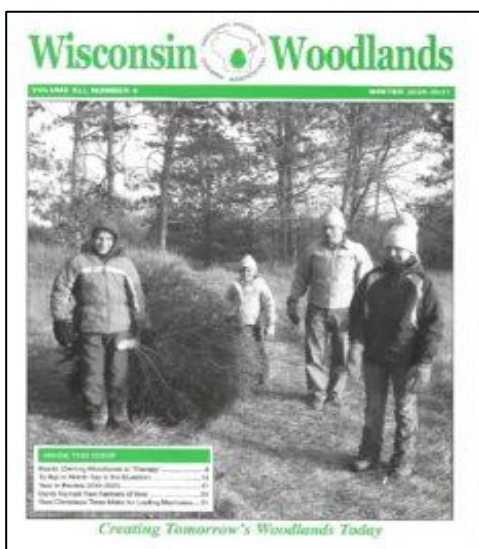
The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) invites owners of Wisconsin's private woodlands and those interested in the sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests to join us. We are woodland owners from all walks of life who have a passion for creating tomorrow's woodlands today. Whether you just purchased your own special piece of land, have owned your woodlands for years or hope to someday – we look forward to meeting you and invite you to spend some time with us learning more about your woods.

WWOA's mission is to ensure that future generations can enjoy the natural beauty and benefits of our woodlands.

The mission of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association is to conserve and enhance the private woodlands of the state through the following actions:

- ✓ Sustainably manage our woodlands with informed management plans that utilize best silviculture* practices.
- ✓ Assist private landowners in achieving their management goals by connecting them with natural resource professionals and fellow woodland owners.
- ✓ Educate the public on the value of woodlands for economic, environmental, recreational, and wildlife habitat purposes.

These actions will ensure future generations can enjoy the natural beauty and benefits of our woodlands. Our vision is to be the "go-to" organization to assist woodland owners in achieving their sustainable forestry goals. (*Silviculture – The care and development of forests in order to obtain a product or provide a benefit).



What is the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA)?

We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and an independent, nonpartisan voice who speak for the landowners of Wisconsin. The objectives of the Association are to advance the interests of woodland owners and the cause of forestry. We seek to develop public appreciation for the value of Wisconsin woodlands and their importance in the economy and overall welfare of the state by fostering and encouraging the wise use and management of the woodlands for timber, wildlife,

and recreation. WWOA's objectives are for the present and future generations.

What does WWOA do?

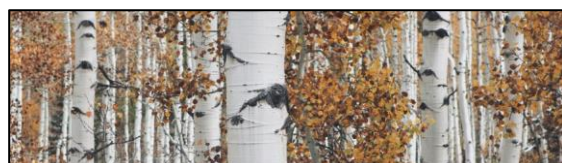
WWOA works to address major issues which affect all landowners via its committees. The State organization holds a four-day annual meeting where fellow landowners can meet and discuss forestry issues.



What are WWOA chapters?

Each county is in a WWOA chapter where landowners meet to discuss local issues. Most chapters have two field days a year where they go to a landowner's property and see what they have done to on their property and what they are planning to do in the future. There are 13 chapters in the state. All chapters have an annual meeting where they discuss the type of field days they would like to have and elect officers for the coming year. For more information, visit <https://wisconsinwoodlands.org/local-chapters/>.

The Phoenix Falls Chapter is our local chapter, which includes Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, and Florence Counties. For more information, contact Chapter Chair, Ted Zabel, at 920-425-4964 or tzabel5125@hotmail.com. WWOA members are encouraged to join any of WWOA's local chapters to meet neighboring woodland owners and learn more about local forest issues and management techniques. Chapter Field Days and meetings are listed on the [Calendar of Events](#).



How does a WWOA chapter differ from the State WWOA organization?

The state publishes an award-winning magazine four times a year and sends it out to state members. It also publishes two newsletters a year with the American Tree Farm System. It speaks for all WWOA members at the state level such as meeting with the State legislature. You need to be a member of the state WWOA organization to belong to a chapter.

How do I join a chapter?

When you join the State organization, they will notify you of the chapter you live in and you contact them if you are interested in joining it. If your land is in a different chapter, you can join it instead of the one you live in. You can belong to more than one chapter if you want to. Each chapter has its own structure of dues.

For more about the WWOA visit the title bar websites. Other woodland organizations include:

- ✓ <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/ForestLandowners> - WDNR
- ✓ <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/forestlandowners/woodlandownerorgs> - WDNR
- ✓ <https://mywisconsinwoods.org/>
- ✓ <https://www.wiafo.org/> - Wisconsin Alliance of Forest Owners
- ✓ <https://woodlandinfo.org/> - UW Extension Forestry

DNR Confirms Recent Discovery of Largemouth Bass Virus in Smallmouth Bass taken from Door County Waters

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/50921>

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) confirms largemouth bass virus in smallmouth bass taken from the bay of Green Bay near Door County. In September 2021, 14 diseased smallmouth bass were collected from the waters surrounding Door County and examined by DNR fisheries staff. Collected fish had skin wounds that appeared red, ulcerated, and varied in size and location. These skin lesions often had a cream-colored layer of dead tissue in the center of the wound.



Since 2008, smallmouth bass displaying similar skin lesions have been sampled during several outbreaks in Lake Michigan and Green Bay waters. While test results from fish sampled during those episodes had been inconclusive, the virus was detected in all 14 of the diseased fish sampled this year.

Largemouth bass virus has been found throughout the Eastern United States and previously identified in Wisconsin's Mississippi River Basin. The virus can cause weakness, abnormal swimming, swimbladder over-inflation, reddening and death in largemouth bass populations.

While it is suspected that largemouth bass virus is involved in the development of the skin lesions on the 14 smallmouth bass, little is definitively known about its ability to cause disease or death in the species. DNR staff will continue to monitor smallmouth bass populations and collect additional samples to confirm largemouth bass virus in future outbreaks.

To avoid spreading largemouth bass virus and other harmful pathogens, anglers should follow the DNR's [aquatic invasive species](#) guidance and actively practice the following:

- [Drain all water from boats, motors and all equipment.](#)
- Do not move live fish away from a waterbody.
- Handle bass as quickly and gently as possible if you intend to release them.
- Target smallmouth bass during cooler weather to reduce the stress on fish.
- Refrain from hauling fish in live wells unless fish are to be harvested.
- Report smallmouth bass with skin lesions and dead or dying fish to local biologists or fish health staff.

While largemouth bass virus is not known to infect humans, the DNR urges anglers harvesting any fish to thoroughly cook their catch, never consume dead or dying fish and follow the [Center for Disease Control's food safety guidelines](#).



What to do When a Bird Hits your Window

www.thespruce.com/when-birds-hit-windows-386511



Every birder has heard the resounding thud of a bird hitting a window, and even with the best [preventative measures to help birds avoid the glass](#), impacts are inevitable. But when a bird strikes a window, what can be done to help it recover?

Why Birds Hit Windows

Birds are intelligent about natural predators and obstacles in their environment, but they do not recognize glass as a solid surface and have no conception that it can be dangerous. Most often, window collisions happen because birds see various reflections in the glass and mistake those reflections for something real.

Reflecting branches, for example, can seem like a good place to land, a feeder reflection may seem like a tasty food source, or reflected clouds can look like a clear flight path. Even reflections of other birds can be confusing because it will seem as though the area beyond the glass is safe.

When birds are panicked, such as being startled or chased by a hawk or cat, they are even more likely to crash into the glass, even if that glass has been treated or made more visible.

When Window Collisions Happen

While there are many ways to prevent bird window collisions, even the most vigilant birder will occasionally have a bird strike a window. When that happens:

1. Find the bird.

If the collision was minor, the bird might fly off right away, or it may move somewhat away from the window. If it were stunned, however, it would likely be underneath the window or very close by and may not be alert or moving.

2. Observe the bird closely.

Before handling the bird, watch closely to see how it reacts. Many stunned birds will sit quietly as they recover, perhaps with their wings slightly drooped, and if they are in a safe area, they do not need to be moved. [If the bird is unconscious](#) or thrashing about, however, it may need additional care.



The NWJ's editor, Anne Bartels, had a goldfinch hit the window. It was stunned, so she placed it on a chair so it wouldn't lay in the snow and get too cold. It flew off about ½ hour after the window strike. The curtains were partially closed, but that didn't prevent a window strike.

3. Check for injuries.

If the bird is unconscious, gently pick it up or carefully check for visible injuries, including signs of broken bones or cuts. Other indications may be missing feathers or a discharge from the bill. If the bird is severely hurt, contact a bird rescue organization to ensure the bird gets immediate, appropriate medical care. While handling the bird, it is always wise to wear gloves.

4. Keep the bird safe.

If the bird appears just to be stunned, put it in a safe, sheltered place. If possible, leave the bird in the area where the collision occurred, but if the area is not safe from predators or other hazards, put the bird in a small box or paper bag. The box or bag should be large enough that the bird can spread its wings, and it may be lined with newspapers or a clean rag. Loosely close the box while still ensuring the bird has plenty of air circulation, and keep the box in a quiet, warm spot as the bird recovers.



5. Give the bird recovery time.

Depending on the severity of the impact, it may take just a few minutes or up to 2-3 hours for a bird to recover, and during that time it should be stimulated as little as possible. Do not open the box or bag to check the birds' condition, and do not poke or prod the bird to try and get a response. Instead, listen for it to begin moving around, which will be the best sign of its recovery. If the bird is showing no signs of recovery after 2-3 hours, it should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator even if there are no other injuries visible.

6. Release the bird.

Once the bird begins to move and show more activity, it should be returned to its environment. Take the box outdoors and gently open it in the same area where the collision occurred so the bird can easily get its bearings. The bird should fly out fairly quickly, but it may not fly far as it adjusts to the surroundings. If it is not safe to release the bird in the same area, take it to the closest similar habitat where it will find good food, fresh water, and safe shelter.

Not all birds will recover from window collisions. Internal bleeding or injuries may not be obvious but can be fatal, and if the bird dies, it should be disposed of properly.

What Not to Do

It is natural to want to help every window collision victim, but there are some steps birders should **never** take, even with the best intentions.

- **Do not offer food or water to an injured bird.**

Birds have very specific diets, and an injured bird needs a quiet, calm environment to recover. The bird will happily forage on its own after it is released and does not need any feeding during the brief recovery period.

- **Do not give the bird any medications.** Many human medications are toxic to birds. If the bird has an obvious broken limb or severe bleeding, wrap it snugly in gauze or rags to limit its movement, and get it to a rehabilitator for proper care and avian medication immediately.
- **Do not release the bird indoors.** It can be tempting to open a bag or box to check on the bird's progress, but doing so may accidentally startle the bird into a premature escape. This will cause the bird even more panic and stress when it finds itself in unfamiliar surroundings, and it may injure itself further by colliding with furniture, walls, mirrors, or windows as it tries to get away.
- **Never keep a wild bird as a pet, even if you intend to eventually release it.** Keeping a wild bird captive, even for a short time, is a violation of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and similar legislation, and can be punished with fines or jail time. It is never in the bird's best interests to get it accustomed to humans in any way.
- **Never handle raptors, even small ones.** [Birds of prey](#) have powerful bills and talons, and mishandling these birds can create long-lasting problems for them to resume hunting in the wild. If a raptor collides with your windows, contact a wildlife rehabilitator or bird rescue organization for guidance.

Preventing Future Window Collisions

The best thing to do when a bird hits a window is to take steps to prevent any more collisions. If one window is a consistent problem, scrutinize it for reflections or other specific threats that may be causing birds' confusion, and use multiple techniques to keep birds safe. While it is important for birders to know what to do when a bird collides with a window, it is always best if they never need to use that knowledge.

Decals or window clings, netting, screens, acopian bird savers (below), or 'bird tape' are some methods to prevent window strikes.



For more about protecting birds from windows, visit:

- ✓ <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/why-birds-hit-windows-and-how-you-can-help-prevent-it/>
- ✓ <https://abcbirds.org/acopian-birdsavers>
- ✓ <https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/learn/top10/windowstrikes.php>



You've heard of the elf on the shelf,
now get ready for



Hot Tips to Prepare your Home for Winter

<https://bobber.discoverwisconsin.com/hot-tips-to-prep-your-home-for-winter/>



As Wisconsinites all know, winter is right around the corner and it's time to start getting your home ready for the first big midwestern cold-front to come through. But blasting the heat in your home doesn't mean you have to skyrocket your bill either. Saving money and keeping your home comfortable this winter can be made easy through the help of [Focus on Energy's](#) energy efficiency program. Check out these winter home tips to help you save money while keeping your home comfortable all winter long!

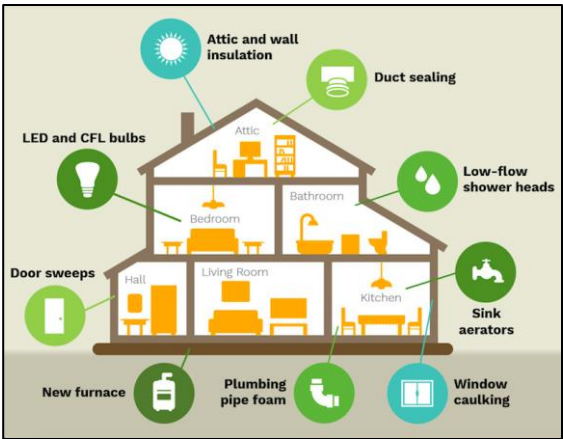
Energy Efficiency Pack

The first tip to helping Wisconsinites become more efficient this winter is by claiming your free energy-saving pack from [Focus On Energy!](#) Yes, we said *free*! This is a great first step toward resting a green environment in your own home. Focus On Energy offers 5 different energy saving packs from high efficiency shower heads, efficient LED light bulbs, and much more! You can learn more about the [Focus on Energy free packs here.](#) **
Please note, limit one free pack per three years.



Get a Home Energy Assessment

Through Focus on Energy's Trade Ally contractors, you can get a home performance with ENERGY STAR® assessment done on your home to see where your home is letting out warm air and bringing in cold air. A home energy assessment allows Wisconsinites to see a customized report with recommendations on how you can help lower your energy bills and get comfort all winter long. [Get prepared for winter now and see how you can get your home ready for another Wisconsin winter here.](#)



Invest in a Smart Thermostat

One way Wisconsinites can save up to \$120 per year in their homes is by investing in a smart thermostat! Sounds complicated? Thankfully it's not! Our friends at Focus on Energy will help with the up-front cost with their \$50 smart thermostat incentive! Smart thermostats auto-adjust based on the outside temperatures and your personal preferences,

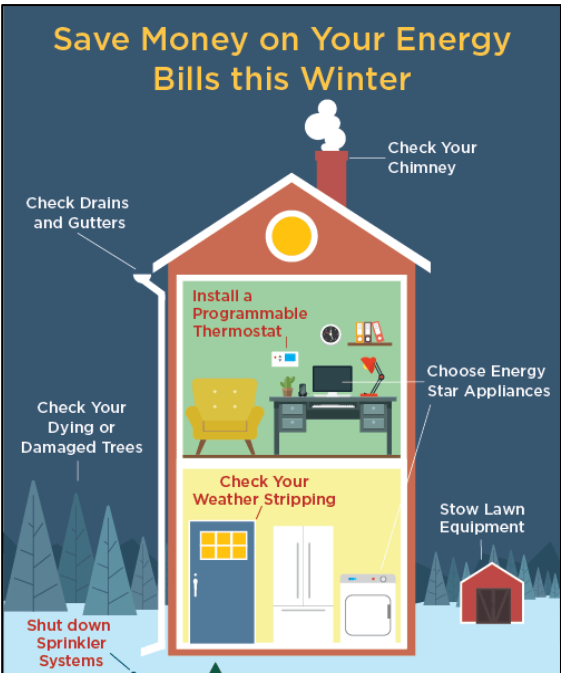
making it easy to help save energy and money all year long, and you don't have to think twice about the temperature in your home. Snag your [Focus on Energy's smart thermostat incentives here.](#)



These small steps can add up to a big impact in your home and help you get prepared for another Wisconsin winter! Whether you're ready to invest in a new smart thermostat, schedule an energy assessment, or start with a Focus on Energy free-pack, these are all steps in the right direction to help you save money and stay comfortable, while making Wisconsin greener and more sustainable!



About Focus on Energy: Focus on Energy is funded by 107 partnering utilities and electric cooperatives across the state. Customers of those energy providers are eligible for the expertise and financial incentives through Focus on Energy solutions and offerings. These solutions help Wisconsin homeowners, manufacturers, small business owners, farmers, municipalities and other groups reduce energy waste, energy costs and pollution.



2022 State Park & Forest Admission Stickers and Trail Passes Now Available

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/admission> &
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/admission/trailpass>



2022 Wisconsin state park and forest admission passes are now on sale, giving you access to more than 60 state parks, forests and recreation areas across Wisconsin.



The 2022 stickers and passes for admission to parks, forests, recreation areas and trails are valid from the date of purchase through Dec. 31, 2022.



Stickers and passes make a great holiday gift for any outdoors lover. We recommend purchasing stickers by Friday, Dec. 10 to receive them before the holidays.

Resident and non-resident annual admission stickers are available [online](#) and at individual state parks and forest properties via drive-up window service, self-registration kiosks or over the phone. State trail passes are available only at individual properties.



[Learn more about the Wisconsin state park and forest vehicle admission sticker.](#)



Spot the Owl in Your Backyard Trees

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/birding-basics/spot-owl-backyard/>

If you've never seen an owl in your backyard, that doesn't mean one isn't there. These mysterious birds are nocturnal predators, so they hunt in the darkness after you've gone to bed. Their special feathers allow them to fly in complete silence, making owls even more difficult to hear than they are to spot in trees. Put on your detective's cap and become a sharp-eyed owl observer.



Barred owls in a tree

To spot an owl, stay up late and do some nocturnal wildlife-watching from the comfort of your deck or on your next camping trip. As human activity dies down for the evening and the smaller animals that owls prey on become active, you are more likely to spot one of these nighttime birds. Binoculars are a must for owl observation, and if you're a birder, you probably have a set handy. If you don't own a pair yet, there are plenty of high-quality, beginner binoculars to get you started.

Thanks to excellent camouflage, owls are still able to fly under the radar once the sun comes up. If you move quietly and scan patiently, you may be able to spot an owl on its daytime roost. Owls often roost in dense evergreens. They'll also perch close to the trunk in other kinds of trees, where they're easier to spot once autumn leaves fall. Some species roost inside tree cavities, and you may be able to spot them looking out of the holes on warm days.



This eastern screech owl has perfect camouflage

Listen for Owl Sounds

Even though it's unlikely you'll hear one of these birds of prey flapping its wings because of the silencing flight feathers, your ears are still some of your best tools for discovery. Owls can be quite vocal, and like other bird groups, different species have different calls. Owls in towns and cities are often less vocal than those in wild country. But late at night, after traffic quiets down, listen for them calling. Whether it's the who-cooks-for-you of the barred owl, the ghostlike trilling of a screech-owl or the bold, classic hooting of a [great horned owl](#), learning owl sounds and calls is one of the best things you can do to find more species in your neighborhood. Get your owl know-how

rolling with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website, allaboutbirds.org, which includes calls for each species and is a great educational resource for all types of identification.



A family of great-horned owls

How to Find Owl Pellets and Feathers

Beyond sight and sound, there are plenty of other ways to notice when an owl might be nearby. Like all birds, they molt their feathers and grow a new set every year. Be on the lookout for large feathers on the ground, and have a field guide handy to match your find with the correct species.

Owls also produce pellets - little balls of hair and bone that they regurgitate. Owls often swallow their food whole, later coughing up the indigestible parts. You may find owl pellets of matted fur, tiny bones, and insect scales under dense evergreens where the owls have roosted. These remainders are sure signs that owls are around. Scour the ground beneath trees for owl pellets (below), and if you're really feeling adventurous, take one apart to learn what the owls in your neighborhood have been eating for dinner.



Additionally, once owls find a roosting spot, they may use it for several days. Their droppings accumulate as "whitewash" on the ground or on the tree trunk below their perch.

In Wisconsin, there are 11 types of owls, although 4 species are the most commonly seen: great-horned, barred, eastern screech, and northern saw-whet. For more about owls visit the sites below:

- <https://www.schlitzaudubon.org/2020/11/09/owls-in-wisconsin/>
- <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/birding.html>
- <https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/>
- <https://wildlifeinformer.com/owls-in-wisconsin/>



A long-eared owl

First barn owl nest in over 20 years confirmed in Wisconsin

Excerpts: www.wpr.org/most-amazing-find-first-barn-owl-nest-over-20-years-confirmed-wisconsin



Karla Bloem, executive director of the International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota, said it all started at the end of September when someone sent her a Facebook post from the Coulee Region Humane Society's Wildlife Rehabilitation program showing a young barn owl they picked up in La Crosse.

A resident had called the humane society after finding the young owl on the ground in their backyard. After talking with the property owner, Bloem got permission to investigate further. She said she knew immediately the owl must have come from a half-dead silver maple tree on the property. Her husband navigated an endoscope, a stiff wire with a camera on one end, up the tree's many cavities looking for signs of a nest – and they found barn owls.

It's the first barn owl nest confirmed in Wisconsin since 1999. The species became so rare during the early 2000s that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources removed the barn owl from their endangered species list in 2014 due to "a lack of records." DNR conservation biologist Ryan Brady said barn owls are a very widespread species of owls, with populations on every continent except Antarctica. But in the United States, they tend to stick to western and southern states to avoid cold and snowy winters.

"We're at the northern edge of where it's usually found. It likes open grasslands and generally warmer climates than where we're at," Brady said. "But it declined pretty strongly during the latter part of the 20th century due to the loss of habitat and loss of nest sites with less abandoned barns and cleaner farming practices...For us to have a bird nesting here it's really a good thing for the species and maybe a testament to some of the grassland protection and restoration that's occurring, some of the wetland restoration work, and then some of the nest box programs that are occurring in adjacent states," Brady said. He said the return of barn owls could also be the result of milder winters in Wisconsin thanks to a changing climate.

Now that people know barn owls have returned to Wisconsin, Bloem said she's hopeful residents will start keeping an eye out for the bird and help clear up the mystery that still surrounds the elusive species. They are also known for their unusual blood-curdling screech: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn_Owl/sound#](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Barn_Owl/sound#.).

For more about barn owls, visit:

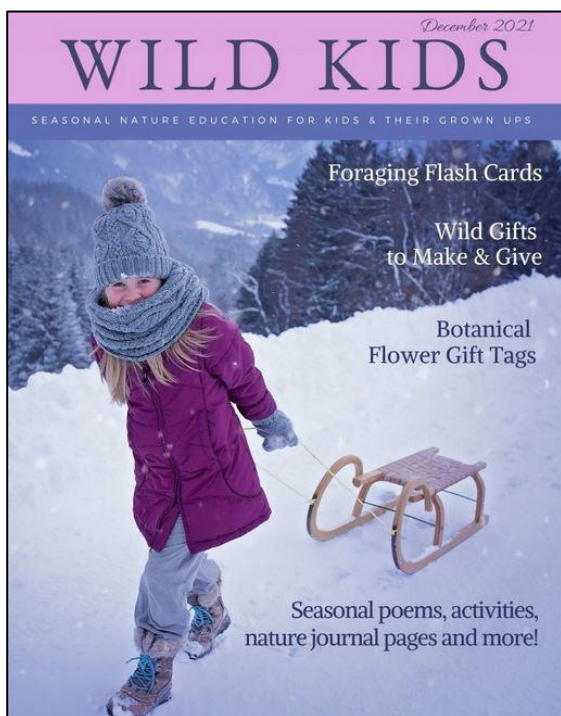
- <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/plan/species/bnow.htm>
- www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/bird-species/birds-of-prey/barn-owl/
- www.barnowlbox.com/wisconsin-barn-owls/





Wild Kids Magazine - Seasonal Nature Education for Kids and their Grown-ups

<https://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids/>



Are you looking for activities to do this winter with your kids or students? *Wild Kids Magazine* is a great resource with nature education activities for every month. Visit the link above for this month's edition (pictured above) and to see past issues. Wild Kids is a nonprofit resource operated by a homeschooler mom named Alicia Bayer.

This month's *Wild Kids Magazine* has some foraging cards you can print out for your kiddos. You can print out two copies to use them for matching games, or one copy to use them for flash cards or ID cards. We have instructions inside on how to use them for various fun purposes. We also have botanical flower gift tags the kids can paint or color. This year we focused on flowers for our botanical coloring pages.

This month's magazine also has ideas for nature gifts that kids can make and gather. There are also all of the usual nature study pages, the weather tree, seasonal poetry, and all that fun stuff.



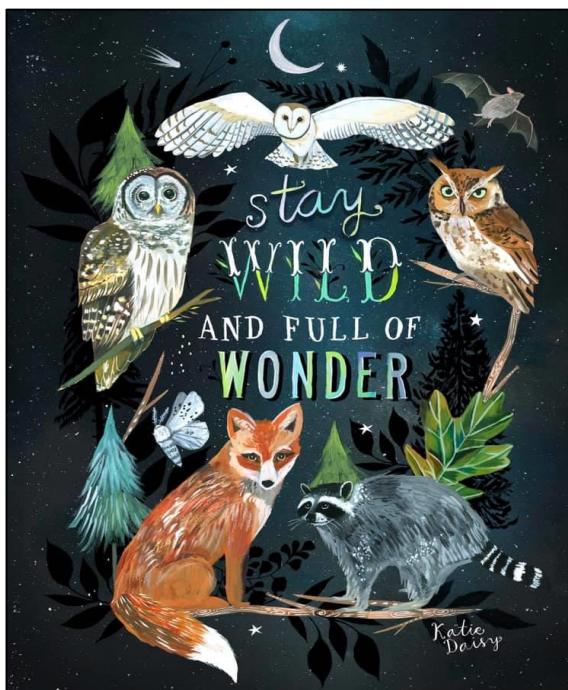
There are also pages for winter nature observations & discoveries – take notes on wildlife, plants or trees, or anything else you find interesting outside.



Other nature education resources, activities, crafts, etc. can be found online at:

- <https://www.eekwi.org/>
- <http://eeinwisconsin.org/resource/about.aspx?s=116969.0.0.2209>
- <https://rangerrick.org/crafts-activities/>
- <https://runwildmychild.com/>
- <https://www.fs.usda.gov/learn/kids> - US Forest Service
- <https://www.nwf.org/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature> - national Wildlife Federation
- <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/how-we-work/youth-engagement/nature-lab/> - The Nature Conservancy
- <https://www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources> - World Wildlife Fund
- <https://www.plt.org/about-us/connecting-kids-to-nature/> - Project Learning Tree
- <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/get-started/>
- <https://www.naturalinquirer.org/>

Get out into nature this winter and explore! There are many places in Marinette County to explore too – county parks, WDNR areas, city and town parks, and more. For ideas on where to visit, visit the Marinette County tourism website at <https://www.therealnorth.com/>.



Senators Propose Extension of Great Lakes Restoration Act

<https://www.wdio.com/politics-news/great-lakes-fish-and-wildlife-restoration-act-reauthorization/6291583/>



November 4, 2021 - A bipartisan group of senators is proposing a \$6 million appropriation to continue fish and wildlife restoration in the Great Lakes region through 2027.

The bill to reauthorize the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act is sponsored by Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota), Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan), Todd Young (R-Indiana), and Rob Portman (R-Ohio).

The legislation would provide funding to conserve and restore fish and wildlife populations in the Great Lakes and authorize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to partner with other federal agencies, states, and tribes for restoration projects.

"We must do everything we can to protect our Great Lakes for generations to come, and this bipartisan bill will help provide critical resources to conserve and restore the fish and wildlife that call the Great Lakes home," Sen. Amy Klobuchar said in a news release.

"Our Great Lakes fisheries and diverse wildlife attract millions of visitors each year and are vital to our state's economy and job creation," Stabenow said. "This legislation will help restore wildlife habitats while combating the serious threat of invasive species." The program has been in place since 1998.



- ✓ <https://www.duluthnewtribune.com/northland-outdoors/7268501-Great-Lakes-fish-and-wildlife-bill-introduced-in-Senate>
- ✓ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117/h-congress/senate-bill/3069/text>



What to See in the Night Sky for December

<https://www.treehugger.com/what-to-see-night-sky-december-2021-5211277>



Santa's sleigh isn't even packed yet, but the December sky already has a few celestial gifts at the ready to close out 2021. So warm up your gloves by the fire, heat up the hot chocolate, and bundle up for a month of spectacular meteor showers, stargazing, a holiday comet from beyond the solar system, and the winter solstice.



Venus at its most glorious (Dec. 4)

Venus, Earth's closest planetary neighbor, rings in the holiday season as the third brightest object in the sky after the sun and moon. On Dec. 4, the hottest planet in our solar system will reach its peak brilliance for the year, shining at a magnitude of -4.9. Look for it in the southwest during and after twilight.

Penguins get a front-row seat for a total solar eclipse (Dec. 4)

On Dec. 4, penguins (and a few humans at remote research stations) will be treated to a total solar eclipse. While the path of totality (when the sun will be 100% blocked by the Moon) will take it across Antarctica, [EarthSky reports](#) that those in southernmost South America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand may catch a partial eclipse. Weather permitting, a view of the total solar eclipse from Union Glacier, Antarctica, will be streamed on YouTube and on [nasa.gov/live](#). [According to NASA](#), the stream starts at 1:30 a.m. EST, with totality beginning at 2:44 a.m. EST.

Comet Leonard Makes a Holiday Flyby of Earth (Dec. 12)

On the 12th day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...a glorious comet! That's right, if you happened to miss Comet NEOWISE during the summer of 2020, Comet C/2021 A1 - nicknamed Leonard - is shaping up to be a wonderful follow-up. The much-anticipated comet, which traveled an estimated 35,000 years from outside the solar system, will make its closest flyby of Earth (from a very comfortable 21 million miles away) on Dec. 12. In the days leading up to this event, the comet is expected to brighten - becoming visible with binoculars and possibly even the naked eye.

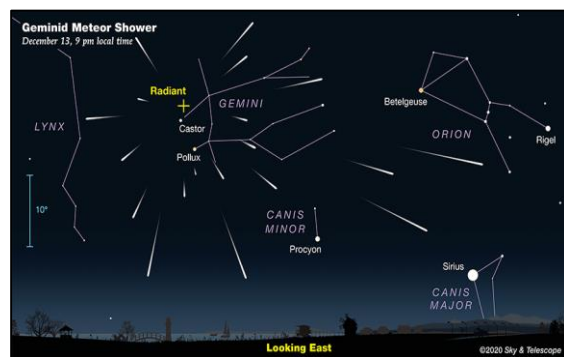
To see Leonard, which is traveling at an exceptionally-fast 158,084 miles per hour



relative to Earth, [you'll have a couple of options](#). On Dec. 10, about 30 minutes before sunrise, you'll (hopefully) be able to spot it along the Eastern horizon, a few degrees beneath the bright star Arcturus. A few days later, on Dec. 17th, Leonard will appear just after sunset directly below Venus on the southwest horizon. Visit <https://starwalk.space/en/news/meet-the-first-comet-of-2021> for more about this comet.

Contemplate the mysterious Geminids meteor shower (Dec. 13-14)

One of the most prolific [meteor showers of the year](#), with 120 to 160 shooting stars per hour, the Geminids are also one of the most scientifically perplexing. Whereas most meteor showers come from periodic comets shedding debris as they pass around the sun, the Geminids are apparently tied to an asteroid named 3200 Phaethon. "Of all the debris streams Earth passes through every year, the Geminids' is by far the most massive," NASA astronomer Bill Cooke [said in a statement](#). "When we add up the amount of dust in the Geminid stream, it outweighs other streams by factors of 5 to 500."



The problem is that the asteroid Phaethon simply isn't large enough to account for this massive collection of debris. In fact, even though it ejects some dust as it heats during its rendezvous with the sun, the expelled mass accounts for only 0.01% of the total Geminids debris stream. The only other explanation scientists can come up with is that Phaethon was once much larger and much more chaotic with the amount of debris it spewed into space.

"We just don't know," Cooke said. "Every new thing we learn about the Geminids seems to deepen the mystery." To gaze upon this mystery for yourself, look up starting on the evening of Dec. 13 around 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. local time. The peak of the shower is expected at roughly 2 a.m. local time and, despite a waxing gibbous moon washing out the fainter meteors, should be visible through the rest of the week. For a more detailed rundown on what to expect and where to look, read our in-depth guide on how [to watch the Geminid meteor shower](#).

Welcome the 'Cold Full Moon' (Dec. 18)

"The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow, Gave a lustre of midday to objects below, When what to my wondering eyes did appear, But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer." -'Twas the Night Before Christmas, Clement Clarke Moore

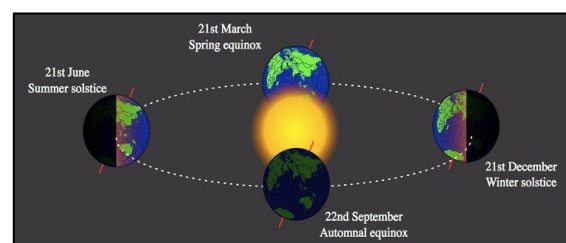
While the Old Farmer's Almanac referred to December's big lunar event as the Cold Full Moon, native people of North America also referred to it as the Big Spirit Moon, Blue

Moon, and the Snow Moon. In New Zealand, where summer will soon officially kick off, this lunar season is described by the indigenous Māori as "Hakihea" or the "birds are now sitting in their nests." View the Cold Moon in all its full-phase glory around 11:35 p.m. EDT.



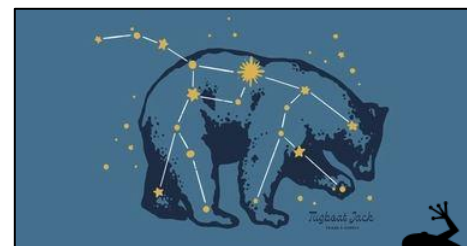
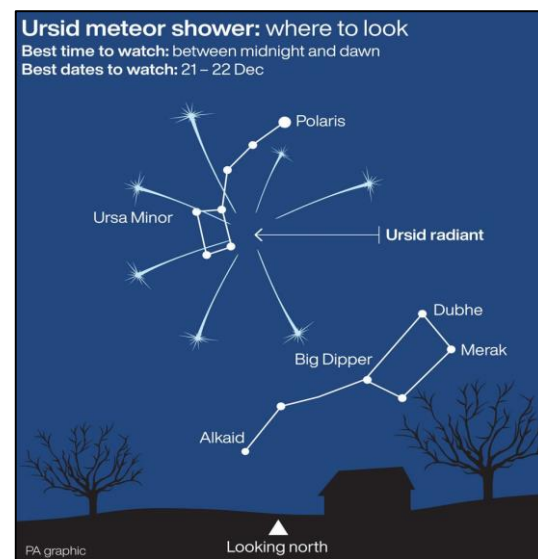
Celebrate the winter solstice (Dec. 21)

The winter solstice, that brief moment when the sun is exactly over the Tropic of Capricorn, will take place on Dec. 21 at 10:58 a.m. EST. While the winter solstice features the longest night of the year for those of us freezing in the Northern Hemisphere, it also brings with it the hope of more light in the days and months that follow. Because the sun is at its lowest arc in the sky, the 21st is also a time to get out and see extremely long shadows. *See page 3 for more about the winter solstice.*



Catch the Ursids meteor shower (Dec. 21-22)

Despite having a tough act to follow after the spectacular Geminids, the annual Ursids meteor shower is still capable of throwing down up to 10 shooting stars per hour. Some years even surprise astronomers, with outbursts of 100 or more shooting stars per hour. For 2021, only the brightest will be visible, as light from a recently full Moon will wash out all but the brightest shooting stars. Originating from debris shed by Comet 8P/Tuttle, the Ursids appear to stream from the constellation Ursa Minor. Bundle up, get comfortable, and gaze up on the evening of the 21st or 22nd to catch the peak of this holiday shower.



Making Christmas Decorations with Natural Materials

<https://gardentherapy.ca/simple-christmas-decorations-2/>



Looking for ways to add beautiful rustic Christmas decor to your space? Look no further! These decorating ideas are both simple and beautiful and will add festive cheer to any space.

Floating cranberries and evergreens in a large footed vase (above) make for a simple and festive holiday table decoration. You can add clippings from attractive outdoor plants like holly and succulents (as I have done in this festive holiday flower arrangement), or you can simply add a few floating candles and light them up. This will last you for a few weeks as long as you change out the water when it starts to turn pink (which is every 4 days or so). The cranberries themselves will last many water changes. These berries are used to being in water as they are bog plants. Therefore, they don't decompose quickly.



With just a few candles, a wooden box, and some fresh evergreen clippings, you can put together an incredibly elegant **centerpiece** in a few minutes. You will need:

- Small wood planter box
- Dry floral foam
- Taper candles (or electric taper candles or make your own Mason jar candles)
- Fresh-cut garden greenery

Fit some dry craft foam into a wood box. The stems do not need water; the foam is simply to keep it all in place. You can glue the foam to the wood box if you want. Set the taper candles into the craft foam, equally spaced apart. Next, start designing the planter with cascading, needle-leaf greenery around the edges. Light the candles and enjoy the ambiance!

Taking a little bit of time to **re-pot your poinsettia** once you get it home makes a huge difference. These blooms can be quite chic if given the chance! Plant it in a decorative ceramic pot, something plain, or even a salad bowl - anything other than leaving it in that shiny foil wrapping it comes in will make it look much more sophisticated.

Making a fresh evergreen wreath is not difficult, but it does take a little bit more time than these other projects. That being said, it's a task that's well worth it - your guests (and yourself) will be

greeted with lovely fresh-scented evergreen at the door. If you've never made one before, don't be intimidated – here's how to make a **fresh wreath**.



Once you have a wreath, here's an add-on that will really make it shine: wrap a string of decorative pinecone lights with a battery pack, and flick the switch. You can change also the look of your wreath in moments by swapping out the lights. Here are some string lights with stars, pinecones, or snowflakes that would work well!

It's easy to put together this eye-catching **holiday window box planter** with whatever decorative branches and greenery you have in the yard. You can even bring it indoors and display it on the mantle if you like. Either way, this rustic Christmas decor is beautiful to look at.



If you have a miniature garden, deck it out for the holidays! To trim a tiny tree, you can make small wreaths out of evergreen clippings. You can use string ribbons and beads and even fasten little festive bows!

Make a 'pinecone tree' table centerpiece by topping a few glass candle holders with pinecones. Set them on a dish and add a few clippings of evergreens, and you'll have a centerpiece for a buffet table or atop the fireplace. For a 'snowy' look, use a bit of white craft paint on the edges to add that little extra something.



Using **scented pinecones** as Christmas décor is multi-purpose - not only does it look nice, but these pinecones can deliver all kinds of aromatherapy benefits to your home with oils. Follow [these instructions](#) and then lay your scented pinecones out on a decorative dish with some whole spices (cinnamon sticks, star anise, nutmeg) for festive decor that smells like Christmas!



Decorate the holiday table by setting a few of the smaller branches you pruned from your Christmas tree on the table cloth, and add a few ornaments and a few red glass balls. Now you have table decor for a holiday dinner or buffet. You can also use these on top of the fireplace mantle for quick and easy decorations.



Set up festive words with **scrabble tiles** amid your decorations. Try 'FaLaLa', Merry Merry', or 'Xmas Time' for a good use of the 8-point 'X'. If you find yourself with 20 minutes, some pinecones, and a hot glue gun, you can make these **pinecone spheres** as well. Use them to decorate holiday mantles, table centerpieces, fun tree ornaments, and winter decor for windows and shelves. Set them outdoors in your holiday planters, or use smaller ones to decorate holiday gifts.

They take more than a few minutes, but it still isn't a difficult project - see how to make them [here](#). You'll need:

- various sized foam spheres (4" balls for large pinecones and 2" balls for small pinecones)
- various sized pine cones, dry and open
- twine (optional)
- stapler (optional)
- hot glue gun & glue

Collect pinecones of different sizes and set out to dry. If you plan to hang the spheres, then staple a loop of twine onto the foam before the next step. Use a hot glue gun to affix the base of each pinecone to the sphere, starting with the largest pinecones and adding in smaller pinecones to fill in the gaps. When dry, set your pinecone spheres indoors or out in any way that you choose.

